

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NATO PUBLIC AFFAIRS TOUR (HELSINKI MILITARY WRITERS)

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1. DURING THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 4, POST PARTICIPATED IN USNATO FY 78 PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM WITH TOUR OF U.S./NATO MILITARY UNITS IN EUROPE FOR SENIOR FINNISH JOURNALISTS. PROJECT DIRECTLY SUPPORTED POST SECURITY AFFAIRS OBJECTIVE NO. 1 "TO INCREASE FINNISH UNDERSTANDING OF AND CONFIDENCE IN U.S. DETERMINATION AND ABILITY TO DEFEND EUROPE". PARTICIPANTS WERE FOREIGN NEWS EDITORS REPRESENTING ALL MAJOR MEDIA INSTITUTIONS: HELSINGIN SANOMAT (LARGEST DAILY UNCLASSIFIED

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NESSPAPER), HUFVUDSTADSBLADET (LARGEST SWEDISH-LANGUAGE DAILY NESSPAPER), FINNISH TELEVISION NEWS, SUOMEN KUVALEHTI (WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE), AND FINNISH NEWS AGENCY. DURING SIX-DAY PERIOD, GROUP VISITED AAFCE AND HQUSAFE IN RAMSTEIN, AFSOUTH IN NAPLES, THE USS AMERICA AT SEA, SHAPE AND NATO FOR BRIEFINGS BY SENIOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS.

2. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, THIS INITIAL EFFORT TO ESCORT FINNISH JOURNALISTS ON NATO TOUR FOCUSING ON MILITARY ASPECTS OF BOTH THE ALLIANCE AND THE U.S. PRESENCE IN EUROPE WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN THAT THE PARTICIPANTS WERE PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY THE DEFENSIVE MISSION OF THE ALLIANCE AND THE MILITARY POWER AND READINESS OF THE U.S. NATO FORCES. ALTHOUGH WE NEITHER ENCOURAGED NOR EXPECTED EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE TOUR BY THE PARTICIPANTS, BOTH SUOMEN KUVALEHTI AND HELSINGIN SANOMAT HAVE PUBLISHED POSITIVE ARTICLES RESULTING FROM TOUR. PARTICIPANTS, ALL OF WHOM WERE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS AND EXPERIENCED TRAVELERS, WERE UNANIMOUSLY ENTHUSIASTIC IN THEIR PRAISE OF TOUR ITINERARY AND SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT.

3. POST WOULD LIKE PARTICULARLY TO THANK GENERAL BENNETT AND GENERAL TAYMANS AT RAMSTEIN, GENERAL MCALISTER AT AFSOUTH, AND CAPTIAN FULLER AND ADMIRAL SMITH ABOARD THE USS AMERICA FOR THEIR COURTESIES TO OUR GROUP. LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE TRIP WERE FLAWLESS.

4. BASED ON THIS FIRST EXPERIENCE, POST HOPES TO CONTINUE THIS SPECIFIC TOUR PROGRAM FOR FINNISH JOURNALISTS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH ALL ELEMENTS AGAIN.
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